

## Northeast Gives Back at 8th Annual Gratitude Luncheon

By Anthony Alvarado, L.C.S.W., Clinical Program Head



Northeast Mental Health and Northeast Wellness Centers held the 8th Annual Gratitude Luncheon on December 16th at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Highland Park. Over one hundred clients of our Older Adult FCCS, Wellness Center, and outpatient programs attended the luncheon.

Hilda L. Solis, Los Angeles County Supervisor, First District, conveyed her commitment to community and to ensuring for mental health supports as she shared about her own family history and its effort to overcome challenges. Supervisor Solis honored the Northeast programs with a County of Los Angeles Commendation, and Anthony Alvarado, Mental Health Clinical Program Head accepted it on behalf of our programs.

Dr. Irma Castaneda, Deputy Director of Emergency Outreach Bureau and Service Area 4, spoke about the importance of community, receiving support from others, and giving support to others. Several community partners-Arroyo Vista Family Health Center, Future Studio Gallery, Arroyo Seco Library, Enrique Huizar of Lundbeck

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Pharmaceuticals, Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, Recycled Resources for the Homeless, All Saints' Episcopal Church, and Northeast Los Angeles (NELA) Coordinated Entry System (CES) Hub-attended the event, and the Northeast programs thanked them for their support of clients throughout the year.



Clients expressed themselves through speeches, poetry, and song. They spoke about the importance of feeling cared for, encouraged, and supported. Angelica spoke about how her therapist and psychiatrist were patient and reassuring as she progressed in her recovery, and she spoke about her desire to want to give back. Frank shared about his experience in giving back to others, and how important it is to help others as part of one's own recovery. Hippolita read her poem about being grateful for all the support she has received and how it encouraged her to become more involved in community. Veronica sang "Ya lo pasado pasado." Danny was honored for his art, and he spoke about the benefit of expressing oneself through art. Otto highlighted the importance of moving forward and "being in motion" with what life brings, and he emphasized how each and everyone one of us has accepted the help of others, but has taken the necessary action to make positive change possible.